1:Gordon E-4, 9 (no date) 1907 ART Khasi ART

members of these clans do not apparently regard the animals or natural objects, from which they derive their names, as totems, inasmuch as they do not abstain from killing, eating or utilizing them. The names of these objects are connected generally with some story concerning the history of the clan, but there is no evidence to show that the clan-folk ever regarded the above animals or objects as their tribal totems. If the lists of the Khynriu and Chorra clans are examined, it will be seen what a large number bear the name of *Dkhar* or its abbreviation *Khar*. The word *dkhar* is that applied by a Khasi to an inhabitant of the plains. We come across names such as *Khar-mukhi*, *Khar nongli*, the first word being an abbreviation of *dkhar*, and *mukhi* being the common Bengali name which occurs in Chandra Mukhi, Surjya Mukhi, &c. Nongli (*nongsi*) is the common Assamese word for a girl. The ancestresses of these tribes were plains women, carried off, no doubt, in the raids made by the Khasis over the border into Assam and Sylhet. The word *Jaing* in the list of tribes is a Synteng synonym of *kur* or *juid* and the Wei word *Mang*, which will often be found in the names of the tribes of the twenty-five villages of the Khynriu State, is merely a corruption of *jaing* or *ing*, the Synteng word for clan. Let us now see how the State or Khasi Township was formed out of a collection of these clans, how these clans obtained political powers, how some clans became more powerful than others, and how a Khasi King or Siem is appointed.

STATE ORGANIZATION.

643 We have studied in the preceding chapter the formation of
642 the clan from the family, and how the former established villages. Let us now turn to the constitution of the Khasi State, which, it will be seen, has been formed, in more than one instance, by the voluntary association of villages, or groups of villages. The head of the Khasi State is the Siem or chief. A Khasi state is a limited monarchy, the Siem's power
643 being much circumscribed. According to custom, he can per-
645 form no act of any importance without first consulting and obtaining the approval of his durbar, upon which the state

ministrie etc. This durbar must not be confused with the 693
electoral durbar which will be referred to later. It is 695
an executive council over which the Siem presides, and
also possesses judicial powers (for a description of a judicial [693]
durbar, see page 91 of the monograph). The form of summons [694]
to appear before this durbar used to be a knotted piece of
string or cane, the number of knots denoting the degree of
urgency of the summons, not a piece of pork, as one writer has
said. Pork is a luxury which is not usually distributed gratis.
The Siem manages the State business through his ministers, 644
although it is true that in some States the members of the
Siem family have been allowed a considerable share of the
State management. This latter arrangement is, however, a
departure from the ordinary rule in the Sirmukhpa, and is
regarded as unconstitutional. In some States there are village 622
headmen, styled Sirdars, who settle cases, collect labour, and 657
serve and receive for the chief the *pynsah*, which may be
literally translated as "gratification." In Nongstoin there is
an official styled *Syngkor*, who is the superior of a number of 646
village sirdars, and who acts as the Siem's deputy-governor. 651
In the Khasi Hills there is no land revenue, nor are there any 643
tithes or other imposts levied upon the cultivator's produce. [643]
The land, to a great extent, is the property of the different clans
and villages, although in some instances there are estates owned
by private persons. The chief is entitled to receive the income
that arises from what are known as the *raj* or State lands only.
All that the Siem usually receives from his people in the
way of direct revenue is the State subscription, or *pynsah*,
mentioned above. Even this is supposed to be a voluntary
contribution, and it is not demanded in some States. This
tax is nominally a collection to meet the expenses of the State
economies, but is really a means of increasing the chief's
private income. The contribution varies in amount according
to the means of the villagers. The Siem's principal source of 643
income, however, in all the Khasi States is the toll (*khrong*), 651
which he takes from those who sell at the markets in his 643
territory. As the Khasis are great traders these tolls are often
at the larger markets fairly valuable. The chief raises no
excise revenue, the manufacture of both fermented and distilled

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643 recent years there have been instances of Siems having been summoned, like the Roman Cincinnatus, from quite humble positions, to undertake the duties of chief. We will now turn to
643 an examination of the systems in the different Siemships. In
793 the Kyrim or Nongkrem State there is a spiritual head, i.e. a High Priestess, *Ka Siem Sad*, who is responsible for the due performance of the State religious ceremonies, although, as already stated, the Siem also performs some of these duties. The temporal power here is delegated by the High Priestess to a Siem, who is her son or her nephew, or occasionally some
[645] more distant male descendant. It is the duty of an official called a *lyngdoh*, who is the official spokesman of the Siem's *durbar*, to propose a new Siem to the six *lyngdohs*, or priests, and to the heads of the twenty-four *mantri* clans. The latter then decide in *durbar* whether the proposed Siem should be appointed. In the event of their disapproving of the *lyngdoh's* nomination they proceed to elect another Siem. The High Priestess is appointed by the above electors, the order of succession to the post being as follows:—She is succeeded by her eldest surviving daughter; failing daughters, by the eldest daughter of her eldest daughter; failing daughters of her eldest daughter, by the eldest daughter of her second daughter, and so on. If there are no daughters or grand-daughters, as above, she is succeeded by her eldest sister. In the absence of sisters, she is succeeded by the eldest daughter of her mother's eldest sister, and so on. In this State the tradition runs that the first High Priestess was Ka Pah Syntiew, i.e. the flower-lured one. Ka Pah
[773] Syntiew was a beautiful maiden who had as her abode a cave at Marai, near Nongkrem, whence she was enticed by a man of the Mylliem-ngap clan by means of a flower. She was taken by him to be his bride, and she became not only the first High Priestess, but also the mother of the Siems of Nongkrem.* In Nongkrem the electors may disqualify the first, or any, heir to the Siemship for sufficient reason according to the Khasi religion and custom, such as bad character, physical disability, change of religion, &c. If the first heir be disqualified, the next in order must be appointed
631 Siem unless he be disqualified, and so on. In this State there

* For the story in detail see the Folk-lore section of the monograph.

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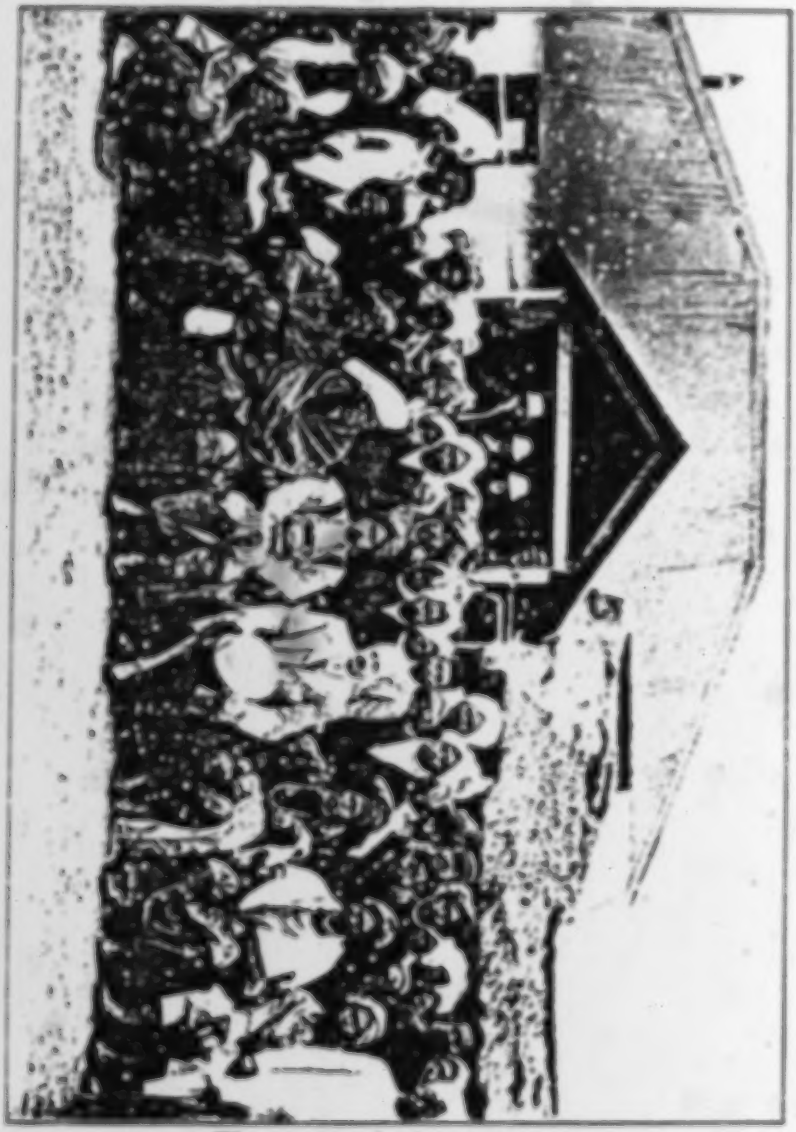

[FACING p. 92]